Comfort

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Comfort

by jonnimir

Summary

Kinktober Day 7: Praise Kink (theoretically). Hannibal tends to Will after his seizure.

Notes

Honestly, I don't know what happened here. It started out dark because I wasn't feeling inspired by regular praise kink, threatened to get fucked up, then at some point just turned into Will getting cuddles? I think I failed the prompt, but it's written so here it is.

Still pretty dubious in terms of the lingering implication that Hannibal *could* do something more sexual to Will and he's aware of it, and there's some sexual tension but it's fairly mild.

Will was feverish and extremely dazed coming out of his seizure state. Though Hannibal had just checked his temperature moments ago, he lay a hand on Will's forehead and felt a hum of pleasure within him when Will leaned into the contact, seeking the comfort of his touch.

Hannibal moved his hand to Will's cheek and stroked along the cheekbone, savoring the contact when Will nuzzled at his palm. It was so rare for Will to be this welcoming of touch; though Hannibal suspected he must be starved of it, the barriers between himself and the world made it a challenging prospect. Intimacy and vulnerability were concepts that Will seemed to struggle with, and Hannibal would admit he was generally not inclined toward them either. Except, perhaps, where Will was concerned.

Hannibal was particularly struck by the smell of him, overwhelming: the fevered sweetness of encephalitis and the saline musk of his sweat, and between the two scents Hannibal found little trace of his usual abominable aftershave.

Hannibal's plans for the night seemed complicated now by the fact that he simply did not want to release Will back into the world. This quiet, trusting, pliable state—this should be for Hannibal's eyes only. He would not allow Will out of his sight.

Will's eyes had begun to flicker around the room, trying to ascertain where he was. Hannibal sighed and placed a hand on his shoulder to steady him.

"You may have had a seizure," Hannibal told him. "What is the last thing you remember?"

Will swallowed, furrowed his brow. "Uh. I was with Garrett Jacob Hobbs."

Hannibal inclined his head. "You were hallucinating; you thought he was alive, in the room with you."

"I saw him."

"He's a delusion disguising reality. Don't let that make you slip away."

Will grimaced. His hand dragged across his sweating face. "Pretty sure it's too late for that."

"You have not slipped away entirely, Will. You're here with me now."

"Mm. I feel… confused."

"Understandable. Seizures are disorienting. And it feels like you have quite the fever. Have you taken anything for it recently?"

"I don't know. Don't think so. But I don't remember anything before being with Hobbs, I… I might have."

"Have you been treating your fever with acetaminophen?"

"Tylenol? No."

“Then I’ll fetch you some. I want you to stay right here.”

“No, I’ll—”

Will made as if to stand up. Hannibal pressed down on his shoulders until he collapsed back into the chair. “You will stay *right here*. Can you do that for me?”

Will nodded.

“Good.”

Hannibal returned with acetaminophen for the fever, and a benzodiazepine to prevent further seizures. The benzodiazepine would also have side effects of sedation, suppress the formation of memories, and encourage behavioral disinhibition—and these effects were purely incidental, but he was aware of them, and the particular state it would leave Will in.

He gave Will the pills and he reflexively tossed them back without taking the glass of water offered. Hannibal had been aware of his aspirin habit, and Will always swallowed those dry, but he disapproved.

“Take a sip of water with it,” he said.

Will shook his head, but Hannibal lifted the glass to his lips and tilted it, and Will’s lips parted automatically, swallowing it down.

Hannibal stroked his cheek. “Very good, Will.”

Will leaned into it. Made a small noise.

It occurred to Hannibal that Will might be enjoying more than simply the contact. The affirmations seemed to comfort him and draw him to Hannibal in some way.

Testing, he said, “I know this must be very disorienting for you, Will. You’re doing very well, and I'm proud of you for coming to see me tonight when you knew you needed help.”

Will shivered, nuzzled further into Hannibal’s hand, and Hannibal rewarded him by running the fingers of his free hand over Will’s scalp in a soft massage. Hannibal was sure his headache must be terrible.

“I’d like to get you upstairs to rest,” he said. The sedative effects would set in soon. “Can you stand up for me?”

Will nodded blearily and staggered to his feet. Hannibal put out an arm to support him, circling around Will’s waist.

“There you go,” he said. “Just like that.” And Will groaned, leaned into him, rested his head on his shoulder.

They made it up to the room, though somewhat clumsily, and Hannibal sat Will on the bed in his guest room. Will immediately slumped against him, and Hannibal allowed it for a

moment, fingers petting through Will’s hair in a gesture that was well tolerated. Then he pushed Will back, gently.

“You should take off your jacket before you rest,” he said. “I don’t want you to overheat.”

Will nodded and awkwardly tried to shrug off the jacket, getting somewhat stuck and necessitating Hannibal’s intervention to free his arms. Will’s face ended up pressing into Hannibal’s shoulder, and then his neck as Will inhaled and sighed sleepily on the exhale.

His breath sent shivers down Hannibal’s spine, and he bit his tongue. He was thinking things that were inappropriate in this situation—Will was too sick and too close to unconscious for them to be acceptable. But his body was responding as if Will’s gesture was entirely intentional. He wondered what was going on in Will’s mind, and whether he was seeking Hannibal specifically or simply any human contact.

He pushed Will away, watched his head loll slightly and stabilized it, bracing his fingers at the base of his skull. Will’s gaze was unfocused and his mouth had parted slightly, but he steadied when Hannibal helped him.

And Hannibal’s hand dragged from the back of Will's neck to the front, smoothing along the ridges of his trachea and feeling his throat contact when he swallowed. Hannibal swallowed in response, aware of feeling a bit too warm himself. His fingers slid down Will's neck and rested on his collarbone.

He wanted to check Will's level of self-awareness. “Do you know where you are, Will?”

"Mm." He blinked blearily. “Your bedroom.”

“Close enough. And you know who I am?”

“Hannibal.”

Not “Dr. Lecter.” Hannibal smiled, and Will’s mouth twitched minutely in sympathetic response, even with his overloaded brain.

“Very good. Will…” He paused. He had to be practical. “I’m going to remove your shoes, is that all right?”

He nodded.

“Excellent.” He removed them and set them aside, then eyed the rough fabric of Will's trousers. “What about your pants? They don’t look comfortable to sleep in.”

Will shrugged.

“I’ll remove them as well, if that’s okay. You’ll feel better that way, don’t you think?”

Will nodded again, agreeably.

Hannibal unbuckled his belt and slid it out of the belt loops, setting it aside. Undid the button and zipper of Will's pants. Ignored the subtext that came to mind when he enacted these gestures.

"You'll have to either stand or lie back to help me here, Will. Please do."

Will hummed, then lay down flat on the bed. Hannibal tugged the pants down and slid them off his feet; he was all too aware of the fever-hot skin over which his hands passed as he did so. He gave Will's thigh a gentle pat once he set the pants aside. "Wonderful, Will. You're being so cooperative."

Will seemed to release some tension as he breathed out. His eyes closed. "Still feel warm. Like I'm melting"

"You can take off your shirt, too, if you would like."

Will fumbled with the buttons of his shirt, struggling to coordinate his fingers. Hannibal lent a hand and undid the rest, pulling the shirt open to let his skin breathe. It shone with sweat.

He rested a hand on the burning skin of Will's stomach. Will sighed and stretched out slightly, like a cat. "Feels good," he mumbled.

Hannibal knew this was most likely due to his cool hand offering relief to Will's overheated body, but it still made his stomach clench in want, and he couldn't resist rubbing his hand lightly over the exposed skin. Will didn't seem to mind. His eyes remained closed and his breathing was deep and steady.

Hannibal wanted to offer to help remove Will's shirt entirely, but admitted to himself that Will seemed perfectly comfortable as it was, and what Hannibal more likely desired was to have the pleasure of seeing his shoulders and back bared. And there was only so much restraint he could reasonably expect himself to maintain before it transformed into frustration. He had an image of himself pressing Will down gently onto his front and soothing him with praise while rutting into the small of his back. And that would be ill-advised. Will was quite sick; he needed Hannibal's attentiveness in other ways.

He removed his hand from Will's stomach before he could be tempted to follow the trail of hair below his navel. But Will grunted, rolled onto his side, and tugged at Hannibal's sleeve.

Hannibal reached up and brushed aside the hair that stuck to Will's forehead, then rested his hand on Will's jaw.

"Is it my touch you want?"

Will hummed and the tension in his shoulders softened.

"I never realized you could be such a sweet thing when your guard is down."

Will turned and wiggled closer until his head lay against Hannibal's thigh. "Mm. Sleepy."

"Then rest."

He would not go further than this. The fever had left Will exhausted; there was no sense in risking upsetting him by asking for more than he offered. And he was quite satisfied with Will's contentment and these small, unconscious gestures. For now, it was enough.

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